AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please insert the following after page 2, line 7:

--BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 depicts the construction of pVK601. pSHT56 was cleaved with NdeI, subjected to agarose gel, and the resulting 1-kb fragment was recovered from the gel. The recovered 1-kb fragment was ligated to the 2.5-kb fragment of pUC-trc2 to form pSHT57. pSH57 was digested with Bam HI and KpnI, and the resulting 875-bp fragment containing the trc promoter and pdxJ was recovered from agarose gel, blunt-ended, and ligated to pVK (digested with HindIII and blunt-ended) to form pVK601, wherein the trc promoter and pdxJ were in the opposite direction against the kanamycin resistant gene.

FIG. 2 depicts the construction of pKKepd (Ptac-epd). To amplify the epd gene in *S. meliloti*, a tac promoter driven epd cassette was constructed. Briefly, a 1.0-kb PstI fragment from pCRepd was blunted and ligated into the SmaI site of pKK223-3 in an orientation that allowed transcription of epd by the tac promoter and the resulting plasmid was named pKKepd.

FIG. 3 depicts the construction of pVK602. Briefly, mobilizable cosmid pVK100 was digested with BglII, then about 21.3-kb fragment were recovered. After the

fragment was treated with bacterial alkaline phosphatase, 1.3-kb BamHI fragments from pKKepd were ligated into the BglII digested and dephosphorylated fragment to give a plasmid pVK602.

FIG. 4 depicts the contruction of pVK611. pVK601 was digested with BglII and about 22.2-kb fragments were recovered. After the fragments were treated with bacterial alkaline phosphatase, 1.3-kb BamHI fragments from pKKepd was ligated into the BglII digested and dephosphorylated fragment to give plasmid pVK611. --

Please replace lines 23-25 on page 3 with the following :

--Osaka (IFO), Japan. Preferably, *S. meliloti* IFO 14782, which was deposited under the terms of the Budapest Treaty at the Deutsche Sammlung von Mikroorganismen und Zellkulturen GmbH (DSM) having an address at Mascheroder Weg 1b, D-38124 Braunschweig, Germany under accession number DSM 10226, on September 4, 1995, can be used for the present invention.